

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

### U.S. EMBASSY KABUL PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION LOCAL GRANTS PROGRAM

**Funding Opportunity Title:** U.S. Embassy Kabul PAS Annual Program Statement

**Funding Opportunity Number:** SCAKAB-12-AW-001-SCA-100111

**CFDA Number:** 19.501- Public Diplomacy Programs for Afghanistan and Pakistan

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#### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce funding is available through the embassy's Public Diplomacy Grants program. Please follow all instructions below carefully.

**Purpose of Grant:** Local grants are intended for local representatives of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and universities. They support projects to:

1. Strengthen civil society and secure the fullest participation of women in all aspects of Afghan society.
2. Strengthen people-to-people ties to deepen the partnership between communities within Afghanistan, in the region, and between Afghanistan and the United States.
3. Counter extremist voices that recruit, mislead, and exploit.
4. Expand media engagement and public political discourse.
5. Build communication capacity of the Afghan people and government.

Funding is available for projects that increase the scope, capacity, and participation of non-governmental organizations and other citizen's groups to support and develop Afghan voices and new leaders capable of countering extremism, and that support civil society and boost institutional capacity. Local grants proposals should aim to create, extend, or network the community of reform-minded individuals and groups and should meet one or more of the following U.S. embassy public affairs priorities that help Afghanistan realize its goals for progress with peace:

1. **Civil Society and Women**, by funding proposals which: support civil society and empower organizations and individuals to network and promote a broadly inclusive civil society in areas such as management or business training; political participation; increased involvement of women in civil society activities and education; and advancing the quality and professionalism of public administration. Programs should focus on promoting activities among organizations across the country and long term strategic planning that achieve measurable goals.

2. **Strengthening People-to-People Ties**, by funding programs which: build connections with Afghans at all levels through targeted programming; support the Afghan educational system; support the promotion of Afghan cultural heritage, traditional and modern art forms, and other forms of creative expression; provide exchange opportunities and expose a greater number of Afghans to different perspectives through domestic, regional and international exchanges; support new economic opportunities; support the connections between public intellectual life and public policy; and foster English language proficiency by providing English language programs and resources to reach a wider audience.
3. **Countering Extremist Voices**, by funding programs which: develop and support credible local broadcast content; counter insurgency falsehoods, messaging, and propaganda; promote national unity; advocate for the principles of human rights and women's rights, include those found in religious traditions; present accurate information on the U.S.-Afghan partnership and the new future it offers; support and develop Afghan voices and new leaders; provide educational and recreational opportunities for Afghan youth; promote awareness campaigns that support Afghan goals, such as solidarity and reconciliation; utilize cell phone technology and other modern communication tools to convey information; and develop SMS messaging and other cell phone initiatives.
4. **Expanding Media Outreach**, by funding proposals which: foster expanded outreach capabilities of Afghan government institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women's groups, and professional associations at the grassroots level; encourage use of new media and social networking to reach all of Afghanistan, including new leaders in all fields; support media programming in local languages at the provincial and district level; and sponsor traditional investigative journalism training programs in investigations, business and elections coverage, blogging, social networking and new media.
5. **Building Communication Capacity**, by funding proposals which: strengthen government and parliamentary communication capabilities at both the national and subnational levels; develop and deepen the creative, idea-forming sectors of Afghan society, including journalists, artists, broadcasters, and publishers; extend the reach of broadcasting mediums to rural areas; develop communications capacities in rural areas; support creative use of cell phone technology; expand and strengthen English language programs; foster a shared Afghan national identity and recognition of women's and minority contributions to that identity; and contribute to the Afghan government's literacy programs.

**Activities that are typically funded include, but are not limited to:**

- new media concepts aimed at reaching wider audiences;
- media training projects;
- English language programs;
- proposals to expand U.S.-Afghan exchange programs;
- programs that strengthen government and private sector communications capabilities;
- youth community service projects that practice democratic processes and encourage volunteerism;
- public education projects that promote democratic processes and human rights;

- proposals that support the dissemination of tolerant voices of traditional and community leaders;
- youth recreation, leadership, and education programs;
- arts and culture programs;
- radio and television programming in support of the above four objectives;
- access to education, including scholarships for women and disadvantaged individuals to study at private universities in Afghanistan or at regional or U.S. universities.

**Activities that are not typically funded include, but are not limited to:**

- projects that do not have a business plan for sustaining the activity or monitoring results;
- social welfare projects;
- paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- projects that contain the appearance of partisanship/support to individual or single party electoral campaigns;
- international travel, unless specifically justified within the project;
- U.S. citizen exchange programs with foreign countries;
- projects that support specific religious activities; and,
- and projects that include substantial fees for radio or TV broadcast or mainly are designed to pay organizational salaries.

**Background Information:** The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section is located at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. It is soliciting proposals for local grants that fall into one of the five areas specified above from individuals, non-governmental organizations, private sector companies, think tanks, and academic institutions. The Public Affairs Section representatives are located at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. More information about the Public Affairs Section and its Grants Program can be found at: <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/>.

**Electronic Link to Full Announcement:** Go to <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/>.

## **II. Award Information**

**Funding Instrument Type:** Cooperative Agreement or Grant

**Floor of Individual Award Amounts:** \$2,500

**Ceiling of Individual Award Amounts:** \$5,000,000

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as it may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. government.

**Project and Budget Periods:** Local grants projects generally must be completed in one year or less. The Public Affairs Section will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the applicants, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

### **III. Eligibility Information: Unrestricted**

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section encourages applications from all sectors: committed and organized civil-society organizations, private sector companies, local representatives of civil society, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and individuals. U.S. NGOs may apply but preference is given to local NGOs or to partnerships that develop capacity with Afghan NGOs or employees and include plans to transfer programs to sustainable local management.

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section encourages applicants to provide cost-sharing from additional sources in support of this project. The Public Affairs Section also encourages projects that use highly skilled volunteers as an element of cost-sharing. Applications should explain clearly other likely sources of funding and how the volunteers will be used.

### **IV. Application Submission and Deadline**

Proposals should be submitted online via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or via email to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul at the following email address: [kabulpdproposals@state.gov](mailto:kabulpdproposals@state.gov). Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

To submit a proposal via grants.gov applicants will need to register with the site. Grants.gov requires a registration period of 10 days.

When submitting a proposal, applicants are required to include the Federal Assistance Application (Standard Form 424), which is available, along with guidance for completing this form, at: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or [http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=20&menu\\_id=68](http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68). Applicants are recommended to complete and submit the suggested local grants application format attached to this announcement. Applicants must complete and submit a detailed budget.

### **V. Review and Selection Process**

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the following evaluation criteria by the Public Affairs Grants Committee. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their completeness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive within the context of this program announcement.

Applicants must submit a full project description in accordance with the following instructions and the specified evaluation criteria. The instructions give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria provide details of more program-specific information that is needed.

**Cover Sheet:** Provide a summary of the project description (no more than two pages) with reference to the amount and duration of the funding request.

**Narrative:** Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors that might accelerate or decelerate the work and state reasons for taking the proposed approach rather than alternatives. Describe any unusual features of the project, such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates. List those organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

#### **Application Evaluation Criteria:**

Goals and Objectives – The project is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results and the organization. The project addresses one or more of the U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section priorities outlined previously. Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provide milestones to indicate progress toward Public Affairs Section goals. (30 points)

Strengths and Innovation – Applicant clearly describes how its proposal will address the requested program within the proposed time frame and articulates an innovative strategy or plan. The project builds civil society leadership and capacity, and demonstrates sustainable capacity building. (20 points)

Organizational Capacity – The organization has expertise in one or more of U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section priorities and demonstrates the ability to perform the proposed activities. Where partners are described, the applicant details each partner's respective role and provides curriculum vitas (CVs) for persons responsible for the project and financial administration. Each key person responsible for the proposed project and its financial administration is listed and a CV for these persons is provided. (20 points)

Sustainability – The organization demonstrates a clear plan for sustainable activity after the grant period of performance. (20 points)

Budget and Budget Justification – The budget and narrative justification are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results and the plan for services is realistic. (10 points)

#### **VI. Award Administration**

**Award Notices:** The grant award or cooperative agreement shall be written, signed, awarded,

and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the U.S. government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

**Anticipated Time to Award:** Applicants should expect to be notified of the recommended concepts within 90 days after the submission deadline.

**Reporting Requirements:** All awards issued under this announcement will require both program and financial reports on a frequency specified in the award agreement. The disbursement of funds may be tied to submission of these reports in a timely manner. All other details related to award administration will be specified in award agreement as well.